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SECRET AGENT MAN

NO WONDER MILES COPELAND'S KIDS FORMED THE POLICE

DOUBLE AGENTS SELLING SECRETS TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS; defectors running amok in the streets of Washington; allies betraying allies — these days spies are out of the shadows and on the spot. Yet espionage isn't what it once was, and at least one Cold War vet fondly remembers overthrowing unfriendly governments, planning assassinations and performing dirty tricks. Most of all, retired CIA officer Miles Copeland (whose brood of rock & roll overachievers includes oldest son Miles Copeland III, manager of the Police and solo Song; Ian, founder of the music booking agency FBI; and youngest son Stewart, drummer first for Curved Air and later for the Police) yearns for the good old days when secret agents kept their secrets secret — from the government and especially from the press.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Copeland joined the U.S. Army in 1940. Assigned to the Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC), he transferred in 1942 to the new Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the first U.S. secret intelligence agency. After the war, Copeland was

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station chief in Damascus, "putting Syria," as he recalls, "on the path to democracy by starting a military dictatorship." For this achievement, he was awarded a presidential citation. Copeland became a member of the Central Intelligence Agency when it was founded in 1947; he was appointed chief of the agency's Political Action Staff, the dirty-tricks department, in 1951. "Nobody," he says, "knows more about changing governments, by force or otherwise, than me."

Copeland left government service in 1957 to form his own "private CIA," which he claims became the largest private security service operating in Africa and the Middle East. Today the seventy-two-year-old Copeland and his wife, Lorraine, a well-known British archaeologist, live in a stone cottage in the tranquil hamlet of Aston Rowant, near Oxford, in England.

The White House has given the CIA part of the job of handling terrorism. What do you think they will do that is different from what has already been done?

You know, you're opening a real can of worms here. The difference between the CIA's counterterrorism experts and this new kind that's been proliferating all over the place is that the CIA has operators who know the terrorists, who've actually talked to a few, who've even lived with them, or who, like myself, have actually been terrorists. We understand the enemy, while these instant experts who've been advising the White House have never in their lives laid eyes on a terrorist, and they think of them as common criminals. Maybe they are, and maybe they aren't, but where these recent "experts" are wrong is that they assume they are criminals simply because they are judging them as though they are Americans, brought up on American ideas of what's right and what's wrong. They are making moral

judgments that aren't relevant to the situation. What may be effective in combating crime is not likely to be effective in dealing with wrongdoers who in their own eyes, whether rightly or wrongly, think they are engaged in some noble cause. The Pentagon wants to kill them; the CIA wants to win them over.

Who's winning?

It's not a matter of winning. Just different viewpoints. The president of the United States has got to say what is necessary to keep himself in office. We have a domestic foreign policy and a foreign foreign policy. The domestic foreign policy, which is the more important one, is what he has to do to make the American public think he's doing the right thing. Whether it's the right thing or not doesn't matter. The American people have to think he's doing the right thing because we have a democratic society. Now, the American people were highly indignant about what happened in Beirut [the hijacking of TWA flight 847 in June 1985]. They wanted to do something. They wanted to punish the people without regard to the consequences. The president had to say things to them, make threats, to show the American people that, by God, we were doing something. But the professionals inside the government were worried about the consequences of this. Because what it takes to please the American people is not what it takes to please a lot of people who did not grow up in the American culture but grew up in cultures quite different from our own. We've got most of the world against us at the moment. When we drag out our gunboats, bomb villages and kill a lot of women and children — a lot more than the terrorists kill — we turn the world against us. And the American people don't care. They don't give a damn. But those people whose job it is to look after the interests of the U.S. government abroad, they've got to care. They have to think of the consequences of everything we do. And they know the consequences of dragging out the gunboats are absolutely the wrong ones. In fact, these are the consequences the terrorists created acts of terrorism in order to provoke. That's the purpose of terrorism, not to kill, maim or destroy, but to terrify, to frighten, to anger, to provoke irrational responses. Terrorism gains more from the responses than it gains from the actions themselves.

So how do you deal with it?

You've got to know who they are. You've got to know their reasons for doing it. And you've got to manipulate them in one way or another. We have to somehow come to grips with the problem. The Israelis went in to Lebanon and killed tens of thousands of people. They say, "That's exaggerating, we didn't kill but 5000 people." Okay, let's say they killed only 2000 people, which is a very modest estimate. But they destroyed Lebanon. They then set up groups against each other, made chaos ten times worse than it already was. Instead of helping the Shites — the Shites welcomed the Israelis in — we, the United States, gave a billion dollars

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